

# The Daily Gazetteer.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2. 1739.

No. 1230.

## Some OBSERVATIONS upon the Tragedy of EDWARD AND ELEONORA.



THE World is at length favour'd with the long-promis'd Tragedy of *Edward and Eleonora*; the preventing the Representation of which has been spoken of by the Author as an unexpected Suffering to himself, and an Attack upon the Rights and Privileges of the whole People of the Realm; which loud and unusual Complaint is the more extraordinary, as this Writer had already given the Publick two Pieces of the same Kind, which, notwithstanding the unusual Inclination to approve them, apparent at their Appearance, were found unfit for frequent Representation, and confess'd by his most zealous Friends to be too void of Fancy, and too destitute of Imagination, to yield the Entertainment expected by an Audience, arising from the Accidental Surprize, of some of the Incidents, and the unexpected Dependence and Relation of one Part of the Action to another; without which every other Requisite to a Tragedy may be supply'd in vain:—And it has been generally allowed that this *Heaviness* was never more visible than in Mr. Thomson's *Sophonisba*, where *Maßissa* was kept upon the Stage, *Two Scenes* at the End of the *First Act*, and the whole *Second* and *Third Acts* throughout. *Agamemnon* was yet worse in general, and faintly borne by some Audiences, compos'd chiefly of such as kindly lamented the Author's attempting a Task so far above him, or at least out of the natural Cast of his Genius, and none who esteem'd him believ'd he would again enter the Lists as a Dramatick Writer, however he exercised his Talents in that easier Manner of Writing in which he the better succeeds as less Force of Imagination is necessary.

Whatever Motives this Author might have for the Choice of his present Subject, they can scarcely be supposed poetical ones; for the Story is too simple to be from History, being no more than this, viz. That Prince Edward, while on a Crusade, was wounded by a poison'd Dagger, the Malignity of which Wound is supposed to have been prevented by the Princess's Confort's sucking it immediately.—An Accident which might have furnish'd one good Scene for a Tragedy, but scarcely more: And a Gentleman must have as much Courage as Capacity to venture upon a known Subject requiring such Assistance from poetick Fancy, as must make every Judge of such Writings with the Names it is call'd alter had either been altered or omitted. The Author of *Gustavus Vasa* is certainly blameable on the same Account; and, though I am far from reducing Mr. Thomson to a Level with him as a Writer, yet in this single Instance Mr. Brooke has the Advantage of the latter; since, to form a Design of freeing a Country from Oppression, to bring it into Action, and complete it, would naturally enough have afforded some tolerable Scenes (in the Hands of any Man capable of writing); whereas in the Play now before me, one single Accident, and that of such a Kind as will the worst of any admit of Protraction, is tortur'd into five Acts; and what is the Production of the Author's Invention contributes either to make the Reader regret the unhappy Choice of his Subject, or the Violence done it by Circumstances no way reconcileable with its Nature.—But, whatever Reception this Play may meet with on other Accounts, it will, I am persuaded, be admitted by all who read it with Attention, to be the greatest Instance of the Art of Spinning yet extant in the English Tongue: The whole Action of the Play being thus divided:

ACT I. The Prince receives the Wound, and the Princess Eleonora being told that sucking it was a certain Remedy, RESOLVES upon doing it herself.

ACT II. Is wholly employ'd to PERSUADE the Prince to let her, without gaining his Consent.

ACT III. The Princess having done it while he was asleep, (between the Acts) the Poison operates upon her, and makes her sick.

ACT IV. A Cure is propos'd for the Princess.

ACT V. She recovers by the Help of it.

This is the entire Business of the Play; and how

the Attendant Characters and Incidents agree with it, will appear on a very slight Perusal; the Earl of Gloucester, and Theald, Archdeacon of Liege, being kept in constant Employment, when the Change of Scene requires *Edward and Eleonora* to give some little Relief to the Audience; Gloucester may well enough be supposed to accompany the Prince in the Crusade, but the Archdeacon of Liege would have appeared too great a Stranger to the Prince's Affairs, and too inconsiderable for the Confidence reposed in him, had not the Author, in order to obviate all Objections of that Kind, constituted him Pope in Arabia.

In the first Act there are several Disputes on the Nature and Fitness of Crusades, tinged too much with the Principles and Freedom of Thought that have prevailed since the Reformation, (and particularly since the Revolution) for the Mouths of Men who lived in the Time of the blindest Superstition, and who were themselves risking their Lives and Fortunes in the Religious Madness of the Age. But Mr. Thomson has gone much farther than this, by forcing into the Mouths of all his Characters, Christian and Mahometan, the favourite Phrases that have been invented within these very few Years, to avoid the Expressions of *Jeboab*, *Lord*, *God*, or *Jesus*, which favour too strongly of old Religion, and too much countenance the Doctrine of Revelation, to be used by the Professors of the new Divinity, the Friends of the *Essay upon Man*, or the devout Repeaters of the *Philosophick Prayer*, &c.—But surely, however some Gentlemen may fancy themselves above plain practical Religion at present, a Writer ought not to have forgotten that at the Time he was endeavouring to represent, the Fashion of the Age raised none above, at least, an outward Veneration for the Cross, &c. with which the following Lines but indifferently agree.

In the Mouth of *Daraxa*, a Believer in Mahomet.

Page 30. *Implor'd th' ETERNAL MIND.*

33. *Edw. Th' all-ruling GOODNESS.*

35. *Eleo. ETERNAL GOODNESS reigns.*

*Theald* (the Christian Priest) on being raised to the Pontificate, instead of offering to thank *Jesus*, *Mary*, or *Peter*, for his Advancement, says,

Page 40. *Awful Heaven!*

*Great Ruler!*

64. *Edw. But since by ruling Wisdom (who unweigh'd, Unmeant, does naught) Men are so various made.*

The prodigious Length of some of the Speeches in this Play is probably more the Effect of Necessity than Inclination; for without them there was no Possibility of forming a Play out of the Plan this Writer must be supposed to have drawn; tho' some of them are so very long, and upon such ill judg'd Occasions, as will not easily be excus'd by the Advocates of Dramatick Justice;—those between *Theald* and Gloucester in the first Act, and that of Gloucester at the End of Scene 2. Act II. being merely forced upon the Audience, against the Nature of the Scenes in which they are introduced; and the long Speeches of *Edward* to *Eleonora* on the Point of expiring, and of *Eleonora* in the supposed Agonies of Death (though they may be well enough written) are spoken at a Time when poetick Language is least natural, and consequently least expected and least approved; the 52 Lines spoken at once by *Edward* on a Transport of Rage, Scene 7. Act IV. would much better have suited a calm Soliloquy than the Tumult of *Sorrow* *Edward* must be in on Apprehension of *Eleonora's* dying to save him: And the next Scene, consisting of no less than six Pages, is bestow'd upon Gloucester's bringing the Prince to recollect, that punishing those who kill'd her, was somewhat like revenging her Death.

It is frequently observed that every Man's Talent has its peculiar Bias, out of which there is small Probability of his succeeding; and whoever reads the Tags to this Play, will never wonder at the Author's confining every Subject he handles to Blank Verse.

ACT I. *I with Caraxa will your Call attend;*

*O all ye Powers of Love, your Influence lend.*

ACT II. *But come, and ere the Poison sink too deep,*

*Swift let me seize the favouring Hour of Sleep.*

ACT III. *Come, aid my mounting Soul to spring away,*

*From the lov'd Fetters of this kindred Clay.*

ACT IV. *And, as they see her Turrets sunk in Dust,*  
*Shall learn to dread the Terrors of the Just.*

ACT V. *Let all Mankind, in Love of what is right,*  
*In Virtue and Humanity unite.*

As an Example of the Impartiality, and the Candour with which I undertake to censure the Writings of the two protesting Poets, I here cheerfully confess that, notwithstanding the too great Simplicity of the Story, the Tragedy now before me is infinitely Superior to that Mass of low, unmeaning Confusion, call'd *Gustavus Vasa*;—for in *Edward and Eleonora*, whatever Blame may be due on other Accounts, the Rules of Writing, the Propriety of Language, and all the smaller Accuracies requisite in such a Piece, are, for the most Part, observed with much Judgment and Success; whereas the Author of *Gustavus Vasa*, seems unacquainted with every thing of this Kind, and as unable to observe the Rules of Writing, as he is ignorant of their Fitness and Use.—Yet there are several Sentences in *Edward and Eleonora* that stand in need of Amendment, and many which are much fuller of Sound than Meaning.—In the Mouth of a Prince engag'd on a Crusade, the following Lines are, surely, unnatural;

*Shall I, my generous Country, I be rank'd,*  
*With those weak Princes who consume thy Wealth*  
*And sink thy Name in idle Expeditions?*

Less than such Contempt of an Expedition undertaken by the Pope's particular Appointment being enough, at that Time, to have shaken the Crown of the best established Monarch in Europe.

The Disguising of *Eleonora* to be discover'd on her entering, serves no End that I can discover, and agrees but indifferently with the Wisdom of the Characters assisting her Design;—and when she fues of *Edward* the Liberty of dying for him, it is not easy to guess what is meant by the following two Lines,

*To die for thee be mine.*  
*I ne'er can find a brighter, gentler Fate,*  
*And Fate will come at last, inglorious Fate.*

Since simply to die cannot properly be term'd an inglorious Fate, the most glorious Heroes submitting to it with small Diminution of their Honour.—Equally mysterious is the following Expression of *Edward* to the Princess, in the same Scene;

*This Heart that beats unutterable Fondness,*  
*To what delightful Agony I lose thee!*

When Act III. Scene 2. *Edward* says,

*Chaos of gloomy unconnected Thoughts!*

The Author would have been easily excus'd the Explanation of *Chaos*; a *Chaos* of connected and regularly digested Thoughts being yet unheard of.

I am afraid the Prince's earnest Declaration that he will never marry again, and the *Fervour* with which he utters it, (beside the general Disregard shewn to such temporary Effects of *Sorrow*) will do him little Honour, and have less Effect upon the Audience when it is remember'd that this Prince did marry after her Decease.

The Disguise of *Eleonora* is not sooner discover'd by *Edward*, than that of *Selim* by *Daraxa*, Act II. Scene 5. who finds him out in the Disguise of a Dervise, by his crossing the Stage before her!—Many of our Stage Disguises are undoubtedly kept on too long; but, surely, these are pulled off too soon, to answer the Intention of being disguised at all.

Upon Gloucester's dark Insinuation of *Edward's* being King, the Prince's Question,

*What dost thou mean?*

Is oddly answer'd by so polite and dutiful a Subject as Gloucester,

*What mean?*

Our Historians generally agree, that the Crafts of *Edward's* Enemy got him to overlook the Attempt on his Life; but Mr. Thomson's Story of the Old Man of the Mountains sending the Person dispatch'd by *Selim*, does but small Honour to Penetration and Judgment.

In Act V. The tedious third Scene of seven Pages is spun to an immoderate Length, since all it does is to contrive an Opportunity for *Selim* to tell *Edward* he had recover'd the Princess, and the next Scene, (the last



last of the Tragedy) in which *Eleonora*, being restor'd to Life, is presented to *Edward*, occasions a Joy equal to that of our best Comedy Weddings, every Soldier in Camp and City, being order'd, *fearless*, to give himself up to unbounded Joy!

It must be own'd this Writer has surmounted uncommon Difficulties to aggrandize the Characters of his Play; *Edward*, by pushing aside a few Years, he has made a King before *Jaffa*, though it was long after that Siege before he received Intelligence of his Father's Death in *Sicily*; *Theald* is made Pope for a Scene of *thirteen* Lines; and, that they may not be seen in mean Company, *Selim*, the Governor or Admiral of *Jaffa*, is made no less than a Sultan!

I must not conclude without taking some little Notice of Mr. *Thomson's* Protest against the Power given by Parliament to the Lord Chancellor, prefix'd to this Play in the following short, but emphatical Paragraph:

THE REPRESENTATION OF THIS TRAGEDY ON THE STAGE WAS PROHIBITED IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINE.

Which betrays such a Vanity of his own Performance, (a Passion common to all Authors alike) such an Impatience on a small Disappointment, and such a poor Desire of Revenge, as must draw the Pity of all that have any Regard for this Writer, who would be glad to have him remember, that a Poet, though frequently a Burden to the Publick, has not therefore a better Claim to publick Indulgence than any other Subject of the Realm; his Labours, however elegant in his own Eyes, or even in the Eyes of others, falling far short of the Importance to the Nation which Men of inferior Intellects are often of to a People, and especially to a Land depending on the Industry of its Inhabitants, to which the Muses have never been found much to contribute.

It can be no Prejudice to Mr. *Thomson* to solve the following easy Question in his own Breast: — *Whether an Intention to write a Tragedy, separate from any View of Satyr or Panegyric, produc'd this Play?* — the Solution of which, I am persuaded, will easily account for any Treatment he has had, or may hereafter meet with in relation to this Piece.

Temple May 28. 1739.

ALG. SIDNEY.

#### COUNTRY NEWS.

*Milford*, May 23. On Tuesday last began our Races, when the Purse of Eighteen Guineas, by five Year olds, was won by Mr. William Jeffery's Grey Horse, *Swallow*. On Wednesday the Give and Take Purse of Ten Guineas, by Mr. Mills's Bay Mare, *Ringtail*. And on Thursday, when they ended, that of Twelve Guineas, by four Year olds, by Mr. Pratt's Bay Colt, *Chanter*.

*Morpeth*, May 24. On Monday last began our Races, when the Purse of Twenty Guineas, by five Year olds, was won by Mr. Charles Rasfield's Bay Mare. On Tuesday the Fifteen Guineas, by four Year olds, by Mr. James Burfield's Chestnut Mare. On Wednesday the Ten Guineas, by Mr. Valentine Spark's Black Gelding. And this Day the Ten Guineas, by common Hunters, by Mr. William Jeffery's Bay Mare.

*Newcastle*, May 23. Yesterday in the Afternoon died, of an Apopleckick Fit, Mr. Thomas Watfon, belonging to his Majesty's Customs; he was at the Custom-House in the Forenoon, and eat his Dinner heartily.

#### HOME PORTS.

*Bristol*, May 30. On the 29th, arrived the Ann Galley, Hare; and the Becher, Friend, both from Antigua; and the Margaret and Mary, —, from South Carolina.

*Plymouth*, May 29. Since my last came in the Industry, Hubbard, of and for London from Montserrat; a Sloop from Jamaica, her Name unknown; and the Hopewell, Harvey, of this Place from Havre de Grace. Yesterday passed by two East India Ships for London.

*Dartmouth*, May 29. This Day came in the Neptune, Down, from Exon; and the St. Barbe, Herne, both of and from Lannion to load Corn. Wind at S. W. and fair Weather.

*Weymouth*, May 30. Yesterday arrived the Little Crown, Braine, of and for this Place from St. Malo; and the Providence, Talbot, of and for this Place from Guernsey. Wind S.

*Pool*, May 30. Came in the Thompsons Medal, Thompson, from Newcastle; and the Samuel and

Hannah, Vallis, from London. Sailed the John and Elizabeth, Wills, for Ipswich; and the Mary, Nelson, of and for Sheen in Norway. Wind S. E.

*Cowes*, May 30. On the 28th, sailed the Hannah, Kilpatrick, from South Carolina; and the Martlet, Martin, from this Place, both for Havre de Grace. Wind South West.

*Southampton*, May 30. Since my last arrived the Willing Endeavour, Mayner, of and from Jersey. Sailed the Four Brothers, Breton, of this Place for Sherburg. Wind N. W.

*Deal*, May 31. Wind N. E. The Men and Sloops of War remain. No Ships are come down or arrived, except some small Coasters, since last Post.

*Gravesend*, May 31. Passed by the Adriatick, Huddy, from Havre; the Boulton, Whorlton, from Faro; the Mary, Pruff, from Oporto; the Britannia, Kelsey, from Cadiz; the Poyntz, Fisher, from Maryland, last from Waterford; the Clyde, Watfon, from Antigua; the Swan, Ellis, from Oporto; and the Nathaniel and John, Spencer, from Dantzick.

Arrived at several Ports.

The Revolution, Oliver; the Bladon, Pipon; and the Codrington, Boraston, all from London at Antigua.

The Martha, Ellwood, from London at St. Christophers.

The Royal George, Jobson, from Bengall, passed by Plymouth the 29th of May last for London.

#### L O N D O N.

A Colonel's Guard is order'd to mount this Day at Kensington, by reason his Majesty and the Four Princesses will remove from St. James's to that Palace To-day, for the Summer Season.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland will continue about a Week longer at St. James's.

On Thursday last Stephen Fox, Esq; Member of Parliament for Shafsbury, took his Place at the Treasury as Joint Secretary with Mr. Baron Scroope, in the room of Edward Walpole, Esq; who resign'd, he being lately appointed Clerk of the Pells in the Exchequer.

This Morning Giles Erle, Esq; one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, fers out from his House in Marlborough-street for his Seat at Crudwell, near Malmesbury in Wiltshire.

On Friday next, the 8th Inst. the Raffle for the Great House in Grosvenor's Square will absolutely be determined, and if any Tickets should be remaining in Mrs. Simmons's Hands undisposed of, shall be duly ascertain'd.

The Rev. Dr. Desaguliers, and other eminent Mathematicians, have promis'd to be present at the Decision of the said Raffle, for the Satisfaction of the Adventurers; and now as the outstanding Shares are adjusted, the Publick may be assured that this important Affair shall meet with no farther Delay. Mean time, Shares continue to be deliver'd out only at the said House in Grosvenor's Square, and at Dryden's Head under the Royal Exchange.

In Consideration of the Knowledge which I have had of the late Mr. Simmons, Master Builder, and in Justice to the Character of his now Widow Mrs. Eliz. Simmons, I do hereby certify that I have carefully examin'd and consider'd the several Wheels and Figures which compose Foubert's Mathematical Machine at the Centre-House in Grosvenor's Square, and whereby the Raffle of the said House is to be finally determin'd on Friday next the 8th Instant, and find that the same is founded on the Principles of the Mathematics, and cannot admit of any Imposition whatever; and further, that at Mrs. Simmons's Requests, as well as that of several of my worthy Friends who are Adventurers therein, I will (God willing) attend the Decision of the said Raffle. Given under my Hand this 28th of May 1739.

J. T. Desaguliers.

High Water this Day } Morning | Evening  
at London Bridge. } 06 24 | 06 48

Bank Stock 142 1-4th. India 168 1-half. South Sea 99 1-8th. Old Annuity 111 1-half. New ditto 111 1-half. Three per Cent. 105 1-half. 3-8ths. Seven per Cent. Loan 111 1-8th. Five per Cent. ditto 94 1-8th. Royal Assurance 99 1-half. London Assurance 12. African 13 1-half. India Bonds 61. 105 118. Premium. South Sea ditto 21. 51. Prem. Bank Circulation 21. 17. 6d. Premium. Salt Tallies 1-half to 1 1-half Prem. English Copper 31. 51. Welsh ditto 15. 3. Three 1-half per Cent. Exchequer Orders 5 per Cent. Premium. Three per Cent. ditto 1-half discount. Million Bank 121.

May 22. 1739.

THE Principal Officers of his Majesty's Ordnance do hereby give Notice, That on Friday the 8th of June next they will sell by Auction to the best Bidder, at the Office of Ordnance in the Tower of London, several Parcels of Tarr'd Rope, Breechings, Tacklefalls, White Rope, Parchment and Paper Cartridges, Funnels of Plate, Powder-Horns, Tann'd Hides, Pole-Axes, Pulleys, Land and Sea Musquets, Pistols, Swords and Bayonets, with other old and unserviceable Stores, which may be viewed till the Time of Sale at the said Office, where printed Lists of the Lots will be delivered to such as call for them.

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This Day is Published.

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  - XIV. Prices of Goods.
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